

HOME READING.

My Love and I.

My love and I, in summer weather,
When the sun is shining bright,
And the birds are singing sweet,
And the flowers are in bloom,
We go for a walk in the park,
And I hold your hand so tight,
And we talk of all the things
That are in our hearts tonight.

My love and I, in winter weather,
When the snow is on the ground,
And the trees are bare and dead,
And the birds are all gone,
We go for a walk in the park,
And I hold your hand so tight,
And we talk of all the things
That are in our hearts tonight.

My love and I, in autumn weather,
When the leaves are all turned red,
And the air is cool and sweet,
And the birds are singing loud,
We go for a walk in the park,
And I hold your hand so tight,
And we talk of all the things
That are in our hearts tonight.

My love and I, in spring weather,
When the flowers are all in bloom,
And the birds are singing sweet,
And the sun is shining bright,
We go for a walk in the park,
And I hold your hand so tight,
And we talk of all the things
That are in our hearts tonight.

Half a Sheet.

Just a look the strife began,
Jealousy's flame did fan,
True love's course did smoothly run,
So they say.

Percy Fletcher is a young barrister. His "learned brethren" call him an "infernal fellow," because, unlike so many of them, he is not briefless. But they forget that it is a great measure due to his own abilities and hard work that his present position has been so quickly won. As regards appearance, he is tall and fairly good-looking; that is to say, his profile is a handsome one, but his full face is spoiled by his eyes, which are too small. His hair is light and curly, he shaves his mustache and only wears a pair of bushy whiskers. Not one man in a hundred would acknowledge him to be a "jolly-looking fellow," and yet it is a face that takes with ladies. Ask any of them what it is they admire, and hear what they will say. "He has such a glorious profile, and then his eyes!" "Why, his eyes are the worst part about him." "Well, perhaps that is not what you call good, but there is a something—I don't know exactly what—about them that I like, and then they look so nice when he screws them up," and this is all you will be able to learn. There was one young lady who, above all others, admired him, and who, some three months before the time we make his acquaintance, had given her promise to be the future Mrs. Fletcher. Her name was Mabel Linton, only child of old Linton, late of Lark Lane, now Derby Villa, Harrow, whose pride and pretensions were unbounded. He worshipped "Debut" and the "Peerage" and his great ambition was to marry Mabel to a title. It can therefore be understood that a blow her engagement to Percy was. The intimacy, courtship, and proposal had all taken place, while Mabel was on a visit to her rich, childless aunt, in Raynwater, and old Linton knew nothing about it until it was a *fait accompli*. The "rich childless aunt" had a good deal to do with wringing a reluctant consent from Linton for, next to a title he loved money. Thus matters stood when two days before the April morning on which we make Percy's acquaintance Mabel's aunt had given a dance. Mabel and her father were to stay in the house for it, and Percy, of course, received an invitation. In due course he appeared in the ballroom, and was somewhat astonished to find his young lady whirling round the room in the arms of a stranger, more especially as he had told her he would come early, and asked her to keep the waltzes for him. As soon as the dance was over he went up to her and asked to look at her card. "Why, Mabel, what's the meaning of this?" he inquired, as he saw the initials G. I. against four of the best waltzes. "I thought you had promised them to me?"

"So I had; it's all right—don't be angry, dear—take No. 9; it's only the lancers, but we shall have time to talk."

"Well, that will do to begin with, and then—"

"But Mabel was borne away on her partner's arm before he had time to finish. Percy's pride was hurt, and in no very amiable frame of mind, he walked round the room, until he discovered a cousin of his whom he had not met for some years. He sat down beside her, and then the thought struck him that he could pay Mabel out in her own coin, and he put his name down on his cousin's card for a good many dances. When No. 9 arrived and he and Mabel had taken their places in the set, matters did not mend much, for though Mabel appeared repentant and sorry, Percy was cold and haughty, and would not give her much chance of an explanation.

"You seem to have found a very agreeable acquaintance—I should say friend—this evening, Mabel. I don't think I have seen him before, have I? Ah, I see he's coming next to you in this set, so you will be able to continue your conversation. Don't mind me, you know we can talk any time."

"Oh, Percy, please don't say that; it isn't like you. Something has vexed you, I know. It is only a friend of Papa's, Lord Gerald Ivor, he brought him with us this evening, and insisted on my dancing with him whenever he asked me. I thought you wouldn't mind, Percy, when you know it was Papa's doing, not mine."

"Mind? Not a bit of it. Why should I? You of course are at liberty to dance with any one, just the same as I am."

"Percy, you are unjust and cruel. I have saved all the other waltzes for you."

"I am sorry to hear it, for I shan't be able to have them with you, as I am engaged for them all to that lady in blue you saw me dancing with just now."

"Mabel only said, 'Very well, dear, as you like; but I am so sorry.'"

Percy pretended not to hear, and directed his conversation to the lady on his left, leaving the remainder of the set. On its conclusion he left Mabel in the conservatory, the plea of having to look for his next partner. As he walked away he congratulated himself that he had taught Mabel a lesson that he was not to be treated in that manner, and yet all the time feeling very uncomfortable, and wishing he had made it up with her. For the remainder of the

evening he danced with his cousin, until people began to notice the fact.

He did not see Mabel again till she was leaving the room on Lord Ivor's arm with her father on the other side. She gave him one pleading, loving look just as she was going through the doorway, which he pretended not to see. He did not stay long after her departure, and as he drove home whether he hadn't made a great fool of himself, and whether he hadn't behaved badly toward her after all. The following morning he half made up his mind to run down to Harrow and make peace with her, but then the devil within him whispered that it would be showing a great want of firmness in so doing, and that it was her place, as the wrongdoer, to plead for forgiveness, and his as the injured party to grant it. And so he allowed the day to go by, hating himself and all the world, thoroughly wretched and ill at ease. He expected she would write, admitting her fault. But no letter came. And now, when we see him the second morning after the dance, he has been again disappointed. When he came from his bedroom he found three or four letters beside his plate, but none from Mabel. He is in a fix, and does not know what to do.

"It's her place to write, not mine," he tells himself, "and yet I'll be hanged if I go through such another day as yesterday for all the pride in the world, perhaps I was wrong after all, and it was her father's doing. Poor little darling, I was wrong, and it's no good saying I wasn't. I behaved like a brute; she didn't care for that fellow, I'll bet my life on it. I'll go down to Harrow to-day. By Jove! won't it be grand making up again, *amandus viri amoris*, &c. Those old latin dogs know what spooning meant. But I won't stand any more of the old man's humbug, or he'll be making some real mischief. I'll run home as soon as I get a chance, talk it over with the Governor, and see if we cannot arrange matters so that I can be married this 'Long—Hullo, I hope that's a knock at my door. I was Rogers, what is it?" to his clerk, who entered.

"A parcel and a note, Sir."

"Put the parcel on the table, and give me the note; thank you, that will do."

"From Mabel, at last," he exclaimed, as he reads the direction in the hand that she knows so well. "I knew she'd write, and it was just as well I didn't go down yesterday, after all."

"What's this?" as he opens the sheet and reads as follows:

Sir: After your conduct toward me at Mrs. Laneham's dance it is evident I have been mistaken in your affection for me; your studied rudeness was remarked by many, and, after what has occurred, it is clear that you wish our engagement to cease. Indeed, there is no other course left open, and the bearer of this will deliver a parcel containing the presents you have given me at various times. I may mention that my father quite approves of the course I am taking, and has seen this letter. Of course, we shall not expect to see you again at Harrow. I remain, yours, &c. MABEL LINTON.

"Good heavens! she can't mean it," is all he says, as he finishes reading, and then sits gazing into the fire, lost in thought for a long while, without uttering a sound. Half an hour has passed before he rises with a deep sigh.

"Well, that's all over, I suppose, and she's no better than the rest of them. A real live lord is more attractive than a struggling commoner, and a coronet will send true love to the rightabout any day. But I didn't expect this of Mabel; I did think she was true grit. Where are these precious presents? I was fool enough to waste my money on? What shall I do with them? Sell them? No, I don't think after all, I could do that; they were hers once. No, I can't sell them. Confound it! I'm getting childish over them; there, go up on that shelf, putting them in an unoccupied division of his bookcase, "you'll serve as a memento of where my love's been put, if I should ever want one; and now for those pleadings."

CHAPTER II.

"She to him was ever true:
Lovers' quarrels love renew,
So they say."

Six months have passed since we saw Percy Fletcher last. And we are once again in his chambers. The long vacation is just over, and work has commenced again. It is evening, and the curtains are drawn, a lighted lamp is on the table, and a bright fire is in the grate. Percy is sitting where we first saw him, and if we may judge by his appearance the last few months have not been the happiest of his life. The lines round his mouth have deepened, and one or two crow's feet are beginning to show in the corners of his eyes; he has a careworn look and altogether he seems aged. Opposite to him sits his one chum, Glassdale, also a barrister, who has just returned to town, and the two friends are talking over the events that have happened to each in the "Long."

Glassdale has lately fallen a victim to his cousin Milly Danvers's charms, and is now pouring into Percy's ear a long detailed account of all that has happened. Percy allows him to continue uninterruptedly until he has finished, and then offers his congratulations. Glassdale thanks him, and then continues, "When I was staying with my uncle's people lately at Brighton, I saw Miss Linton. She was down there with her father, and Ivor was with them as their guest."

"Oh!" is all Percy's reply, but an anxious, inquiring look comes into his eyes which is quite at variance with the careless air he attempts to assume. "I spoke to her once or twice on the pier, and do you know, it struck me she was greatly altered for the worse. She seems to have lost all her spirits, and she looks far from well."

"Poor little darling," mutters Percy under his breath, and then aloud, "I suppose she's engaged to Ivor by now. Not that it matters to me, though."

"No, she isn't; at least, I didn't hear anything said about it. But he means it if ever a man did, and follows her about like a dog. I don't like that fellow somehow."

"I should think not; he's a downright cad. He only wants her for her money; every one can see that," exclaims Percy, very warmly, and then, as if ashamed of displaying so much emotion, he suddenly changes the subject and inquires:

"And how did the old squire, her father, seem?"

"Like a bear with a sore head. He will hardly speak civilly to any one. It seems to me that he's got himself into a regular hole over a law affair. His version of the matter is

shortly this. He got some inkling that one of the waterworks companies were going to look out for a piece of land for a new reservoir somewhere near London. I forget exactly where he said it was. At any rate he went prowling about, and found a piece belonging to a Mr. Boyer that would just suit the purpose. Thereupon he entered into negotiations with that gentleman, and as he affirmed to him of 25,000 for the field. The very day he received that letter Boyer was killed in a railway accident. Linton now applied to his executors to carry out the sale, and they laugh at him, believing it to be a mere "trick" on his part, as no vestige of any thing relating to the transaction was found among Boyer's papers after his death. Except Linton's letter making the offer. In the meantime the water works have applied for the land, and offered a good deal more than 25,000, so it isn't very likely the executors will let Linton have it more especially and this is the finest joke. Old Linton can't find Boyer's letter accepting his offer which he asserts he received. You can imagine what the old ruffian's feelings are, seeing a good round sum slip through his fingers. He has hunted high and low for the letter, and declares some one must have stolen it, but my own idea is that it never existed, save in his imagination. He even goes so far as to describe it, saying it was written on a half sheet of paper, only, no crest or monogram on it. All this must have happened just about the time your engagement was broken off, which will account for your not having heard anything about it."

"Yes, I suppose it was about then, for I remember he was always talking about buying some piece of land, and what he was going to make out of it."

"But I say, Percy," continued Glassdale, "to change the subject, there is something I want you to do for me, and I hardly like to ask it."

"Fire away, old man, I'll do it if I can, you may be sure."

"Well, it's just this, when you were engaged to Miss Linton I believe you gave her, among other things, a locket of a very peculiar shape and pattern. I admired it a good deal one evening, when she was wearing it, and she told me you had had it made for her. Now, I want to know if you would have any objection to telling me where you got it, so that I might get one made like it for Millicent. Of course, if you have, say so at once, and I shall think no more of the matter."

"Not in the least, my dear fellow. It is nothing to me now. Miss Linton sent all my presents back when the affair came to an end, and I should think the locket is among them, and if so I shall be very glad to lend it to you to get one made like it. Here's the parcel; I put it up on that shelf, the day they were returned and have never touched it since."

And Percy cuts the string and undoes the brown paper wrapping.

"There you are; that's its case, and I think you'll find it inside," throwing a leather-covered box over the table to Glassdale.

"Hullo! what's this?" taking a sheet of writing paper out of the parcel.

"Here's something I've never seen, excuse me a moment. Percy reads for a moment or two and then drops into a chair and covers his face with his hands, uttering not a sound.

"My dear fellow, what's the matter?" eagerly inquires Glassdale. "No bad news I hope?"

"Bad news? No, the very best news I ever had in my life, and it has been hidden from me for six months. What will my little girl think of me? Just listen to this."

"Take no notice, darling, of the letter you will get with this. Papa makes me write it. I don't mean a word of it. Be true to me as I am to you. Send a line to say you forgive me. No time for more, he's come."

"Look at it, all crumpled up anyhow, and shoved in under one of the cases, so that he might not see it. It's as clear as mud, she must have written that when he wasn't looking. Read it yourself, old man, and give me your view."

And Glassdale takes the letter, and having read it through, turns it over.

"Why there's some writing on the other side, she must have seized on the first piece of paper she could find. May I read it?"

"Of course you may, go on."

Glassdale scans the writing for a moment or two, and then bursts out—

"By the holy pokers! it never rains but it pours. You are in luck's way to-night; just listen to this:

2D APRIL, 1887.

DEAR SIR: In answer to your letter just received, making an offer of 25,000 for the Holm Meadow, I beg to say I am willing to accept that sum, and if you will call on my solicitors, Messrs. Grayburn and Reeves, Redford row, on Friday morning next at 12.30, I will meet you there, and a proper contract can be drawn up. Yours truly, JAMES BOYER.

"There, my dear fellow, you've got the game in your hands now. That's the identical letter that old Linton is worrying himself into his grave about. Give him that and he'll do anything for you I know."

"Oh, never mind that letter; it's the one from Mabel that I am thinking about."

"Yes, that all very well, but look what a pull the letter on the other side gives you. Taking the two together, the old ruffian is bound to cave in. She must have been in his study when he was packing up your parcel, and have taken the first blank sheet of paper she saw off his desk, probably the letter was face downward so she wouldn't see the writing on the other side."

"Yes, I fancy you are right, but to-morrow morning shall explain everything. And to think that all this time has been wasted through my not opening the parcel."

"Well, I must go now," says Glassdale, rising, "it's getting awfully late, and you'll be alone, I fancy. I know I should. But you'll let me take the locket, won't you? I'll bring it you back safe."

"Take the locket by all means, my dear old boy, but let me have it back soon, for I intend it shall revert to its proper owner very shortly. And thank you awfully for what you have done for me; if it hadn't been for you I should still have been the miserable fellow I was half an hour ago, instead of one of the happiest men under the sun."

CHAPTER III.

"What remains then to tell?"

All is well that endeth well,
So they say.

"How shall I manage to catch her alone?" The old fellow won't let me enter the house if he knows anything about it, that's certain. Let me see"—and Percy remains in deep thought until the tram runs under the bridge, and comes to a standstill opposite the platform at Harrow. His mind is evidently made up, there is no hesitating or doubt visible in his face as he strides away toward the hill, at the foot of which lies the Linton's abode. But before he arrives there he leaves the road, and clammers over a gate into a grass field. This he crosses, and jumping the boundary fence, finds himself in another field that runs at the back of the villa garden. Keeping as much out of sight as possible he gains the high garden palings. In places the weather has warped and twisted the oaken strips somewhat, leaving interstices through which he can watch all that is going on on the other side without being seen himself. He has not long to wait. Mabel is walking up and down the garden reading a book, and he notices an alteration in her since he saw her last at her aunt's dance. The merry, laughing light in her eyes has disappeared, and a care-worn, weary expression has taken its place. The light-hearted girl seems to have been merged in the thoughtful and harassed woman. But she has turned the side path now, and he walks within a few feet of him. His heart beats till he can almost hear it, his breath comes short and fast, and he trembles violently as he watches her approach. The moment has come—a step or two backward—a short run—a scramble, and he is standing on the path in front of her.

"Percy!" is all she says; but her face turns ashy pale, and she trembles violently. The shock is too much for her, and she would fall did he not catch her in his arms. He half leads, half carries her to a seat that is close by, and placing her on it, fans her with his hat until she recovers a little.

"My poor darling, can you ever forgive me all the pain and misery I have caused you?" he asks. "What must you have thought of me, never having been near you all this time?"

"Oh, Percy, papa! He'll see you. He's in the drawing room. You shouldn't have come."

"Never mind papa, darling, leave him to me. He'll be glad enough to see me, I'm sure. But are you? I must know that first."

"There is no need to ask, is there, Percy?" And her rosy cheeks and smiling eyes speak more eloquently than her lips those lips which are immediately silenced after a lover's fashion.

"But stay, before I say another word, tell me is this true I hear of you—are you engaged to Lord Ivor? Tell me plainly, child. If it is as they say, it is only a just punishment on me, and I must bear it."

"I engaged to Lord Ivor? No, I never could be engaged to any one."

"Except me," he interrupts. "Thank God for that. I might have known it all along, and so I should have done if I had only seen your letter this morning."

"Seen your letter?"

"Yes, the one inside the parcel of presents. The one you sent me separately I never can call yours. It was my father's."

"But didn't you see the other?"

"Never until last night. I put the parcel away on the shelf, unopened, where it would have been now had it not been for an accident. Can you forgive my conduct, knowing this?"

"Forgive? Ay, freely, if I have anything to forgive. At first I thought there must be some mistake, and then I remembered what took place at the ball, and I thought then that you were angry, and that you intended everything should be over between us, for I did try you, I know, that evening. At first it was not my fault. Lord Ivor was papa's friend, and it was my duty to dance with him, more especially as papa had told me to do so. And then when I saw you were angry, and a little unreasonable—and you must admit that, dear—I determined to punish you for a time, but only for a dance or two. I never intended we should part that night anything but friends. And then, when I saw you with that lady in blue, I was a little angry and hurt, and I went on all the more. So you see, dear, you have to forgive as well as I."

"Whatever there may be, darling, it is forgiven long ago, and as for the lady in blue, she was my cousin, only I took care you should not know it at the time, and I have never seen her from that evening. Let us blot that miserable time out of our minds at once and for ever. And now tell me about Lord Ivor."

"I have little to tell you, except that he is kind enough to ask me to marry him, but they seem likely to fall through, so I have nothing further to say except that the sooner you enlighten me on this mysterious matter the better I shall be pleased."

"Quite so, my dear Sir; I will keep you no longer in suspense," and Percy draws a letter from his pocket and hands it to Mr. Linton. "Will that be of any service to you, do you think?"

Mr. Linton glanced at it for a moment. "Good heavens! The letter I have been searching for all this time; now I've got 'em. I must win now; nothing can prevent it. The game's in my own hands; this is grand. But my dear Fletcher, how came this letter in your possession, and what was the reason of your keeping it concealed for so long?"

"Mabel here will be able to answer your first question. I think if you will show her the letter, and as to the second I was unaware that I had it until last evening. Look at it, Mabel, and tell us what you know about it," handing her the letter, which he takes from Mr. Linton, at the same time turning it over so that she may see her own handwriting. She starts, and her cheeks are the color of poppies in an instant. "Oh, Percy!" she gasps, "I hadn't a notion of this. How could I have been so stupid; but I remember I was in papa's study when I packed the things up, and in a great hurry for fear he should come back, and I seized the first bit of paper I could lay my hands on, and I suppose I took this by mistake."

"Well, dear, it will be a lesson to you in future not to return the presents I give you," says Percy, laughingly.

"Why, then, what is the meaning of all this; how have you been doing?"

"Papa, I must confess; I have been the culprit all along. When I sent back Percy's presents I put a little note in of my own besides the one you made me write; and I stole a piece of paper from your desk to write it on, and I think I must have taken this letter by mistake; I am very sorry."

"You little baggage, and so I have got to

duty, however disagreeable it may be, in order to benefit his fellowman. Such is my case at the present moment."

"Pray, Sir, have the goodness to cease this tomfoolery, and leave my garden this instant. How you entered it I am not in a position to say, but I strongly suspect you clambered over the fence, in which case you have laid yourself open to a criminal prosecution. But let that pass, and leave my premises this instant. Do you hear me, Sir?"

"I do, Sir, and if I followed your instructions you would regret this moment to the end of your life. I repeat, Sir, that there are times when it—"

"Will you leave my grounds, Sir?"

"No, I will not, until you have heard what I have come to tell you."

"Then I will have you turned out."

"Excuse me, Sir, but I don't think you will. It's all right, darling," turning to Mabel, who is pulling his coat tails, and endeavoring to induce him to stop. "Mr. Linton is naturally a little surprised at seeing me so unexpectedly, and I can quite understand his irritation and overlook it, but I can assure you, dear, we shall not part until we are the best of friends possible."

"Sir!" yells the little man, almost white with passion, "you had the impertinence—the gross impertinence—to address my daughter as your darling and your dear."

"I did so, Sir, and I am proud and delighted to feel I have a warrant for so doing. But, as I said before, it is my duty to put all personal feelings aside and come at once to business."

"Your business is at once to leave these premises, and if you don't get out I'll kick you out—there."

"My dear Sir, pray be calm; such excitement as this cannot be good for you. Let us proceed."

"Out of the garden."

"No, to business. I have been informed that you are at present engaged in a lawsuit in which your chances of success at this moment are anything but rose. Now, Sir, supposing—mind, I only say supposing—I were in a position to make your chances of a verdict an absolute certainty, what would you say to me then?"

The little man's face undergoes a complete change at these words, his eyes glister, and his stern and wrathful expression relaxes.

"If you could only afford me some information as to the whereabouts of the letter I have lost I should look upon you as the dearest friend"—and then, as if remembering who he is addressing, his face again assumes its former angry look as he bursts forth afresh. "But this is all nonsense; I know you well enough; it's a mere excuse to remain in this garden. But, Sir, understand once for all I won't have it. So clear out at once. And Mabel, you come with me; I am surprised and excessively annoyed to find you talking to me—this is intolerable."

"Stay a moment, Mr. Linton, if you please, and let us come to an understanding. I give you my word of honor that I can be of material service to you in this matter. But I shall require from you some reward. Are you prepared to give it—yes or no?"

The little man now begins to see from Percy's manner that it is not a joke, and that he is in sober earnest.

"Well, Sir, if you can prove your words you will not find me ungrateful, I think. How much shall you require?"

"Not one farthing of money, only the hand of your daughter."

This calm request once more upset the equanimity of Mr. Linton, and he is just about to break out again when Percy stops him with, "Gently, Sir, gently, remember we are talking business now. Do you agree to my terms? Otherwise we need not prolong this interview."

Mr. Linton seems unwilling to allow the business to end thus, and yet is hardly prepared to capitulate so unconditionally.

"Well, Sir, you see in this matter I am not the chief person concerned; my daughter's happiness is involved."

"If that is your only objection I think you may make your mind easy. What do you say, Mabel? Will you allow your hand to be the price of the information I possess?"

Mabel's answer is clearly in the affirmative, for she rises at once and places both her hands in Percy's without saying a word.

"You see, Sir. Have you any further objection to make?"

"No, if my daughter is willing to make a sacrifice for her father's sake I shall not bid her. I had other plans for her future, but they seem likely to fall through, so I have nothing further to say except that the sooner you enlighten me on this mysterious matter the better I shall be pleased."

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"You little baggage, and so I have got to

Commonplace People.

"It's Seventy-eight Pickett Place," said Miss Diver. "And here is my check driver."

Miss Dorothy Diver gave these orders with an assumption of being well up in the ways of the metropolis, in fact, she tried to speak as if she were in the daily habit of engaging hacks. But her fogged manner did not impose upon Charlie Kingston at all. "A little girl from the country," he said to himself. "Never been here in her life before. She'll lose that complexion before she has been here many months."

Charlie Kingston, he understood, was not a professional Jew. He himself was not so very long from the rural districts. It had become necessary for him to come to New York to take care of an old uncle who was an invalid; it had also become necessary that he should earn his living.

A neighboring livery stable was to be sold out at a bargain, and Charlie had a healthy man's liking for horses. So he bought it, paying part of the money down and giving a mortgage for the rest; and he was here this misty February evening because one of his drivers had sprained a wrist in lifting a heavy trunk, and business was brisk.

Dorothy looked at him as he held open the hack door for her, and secretly wondered if this was the typical New York hack driver of whom she had read and heard so many evil things.

His eye was bright and clear, his cheek wore a healthy glow, and no prince of the blood could have been more quietly courteous than was he.

While she was still considering these things, the hack stopped.

"Seventy-eight Pickett Place, miss," said the driver, jumping down from the box.

"Oh, have we reached it so soon?" cried Dorothy, starting out of a reverie. "Oh, dear, I forgot to ask how much the fare would be!"

"One dollar, miss," said Kingston, smiling in spite of himself at her evident panic. Dorothy drew a sigh of relief. This surely was not the overcharge she had dreaded.

"If you would please carry the trunk up stairs," said she, timidly, half-fearing lest the New York hack-driver should cast the baggage, with imprecations, on the pavement, and decline further to serve her.

But Charlie Kingston did nothing of the sort. He only said, "Certainly, miss, and went up stairs at once, with the trunk balanced on his shoulder.

"The fourth flat—this is quite right," said Dorothy. "I'm so much obliged to you, driver."

And she timidly tendered the dollar-bill, with a little silver dime.

Kingston gave back the latter coin.

"One dollar is my fare," said he, calmly. "But for your trouble with the trunk," she faltered.

He smiled a little.

"It is my business to take trouble," said he. "Good-evening, miss."

And before Dorothy could remonstrate he was gone.

She never saw such a nice hack driver in her life, thought she, as she tapped at the door.

She listened. There was no voice, but there were footsteps inside.

"I wonder," she mused, "if Norman will open the door himself?"

For Dorothy, be it known, had planned a surprise for her brother Norman, who had come to New York, about a year since, to follow his trade of printer.

Dorothy had longed to come, too, but alas, she was not a man, but a woman!

But of late her stepmother had made the family home so obnoxious to her that she had suddenly conceived the determination of coming to New York to live with Norman, thus severing the Gordian knot of affairs.

"He will be glad to have me keep house for him," she thought; and—oh, how could she go to the very top of Pike's Peak to get away from that woman!"

So here she was, upon that winter night, rosy, smiling and eager, when the door was opened at Number Seventy-eight Pickett Place.

"Oh, Normy—dear Normy!"

And she flung herself, sobbing, upon the broad shoulders that eclipsed the one cheery gaslight.

"I beg your pardon," faltered a deep voice, "but it isn't Normy! Mr. Diver hasn't come in yet. I am Royal Brooks—his chum, you know! You are his sister, I suppose—you look exactly like him. Pray sit down by the fire and warm yourself; it's very cold."

And Dorothy, blushing to the very roots of her hair, obeyed.

"Will he be in soon?" she stammered.

"Very soon now. May I give you a cup of tea? I flatter myself I'm rather a dabster in the brewing of tea. We take turns in keeping house, we fellows—Normy Diver, Bill Blake and me, and this is my week. We club together and rent this flat. We couldn't stand the boarding house business any longer, you know, Miss Diver."

And thus chattering to relieve her embarrassment, he bustled around, and presently brought her a cup of very nice tea on a dusty Japanese tray, with two or three fresh fossil biscuits and a slice or two of cold beef.

Before she had finished it, Norman himself came in, fresh and breezy.

"Who have you here?" he cried.

"Hello! it's Dot! Why, you precious little pussy, how on earth came you here?"

And then, Dorothy told her tale, interrupted a few minutes later by the appearance of the third young printer, Willoughby Blake by name, who was equally amazed and equally disposed to be hospitable to the pretty stranger.

"And so," said Dorothy, holding tight on to Norman's hand, "I've come to live with you."

"You are the dea. est little lass in all the

world," said Norman, with a puzzled look; but you see, it isn't a work. There's the other fellow, you know. It's share alike in our house-keeping affairs, and we haven't any extra room."

"I could sleep on the sofa, with a rug over me, and give Miss Diver my den!" suggested Brooks, eagerly.

"Your den is all very well for a rough clap net," said Bill Blake, in a superior way, "but it wouldn't do for a young lady. I'd offer mine, but it is only lighted by a shaft, with Perkins' baby crying all night, directly below. I'm used to it, but I don't think any one else could stand it."

"She could stay with Kitty Chiff?" suggested Brooks, suddenly.

"The very idea!" shouted Bill, smiting his knee.

And Norman whispered to her that Kitty Chiff was the fiancee of Brooks—a bright girl, who lived a few doors down the street.

"You'll be sure to like her, Dot," said he. "I can see as much of you as if you were here."

Dorothy's lip trembled.

"But I wanted to surprise you," said she. "I wanted to be your little housekeeper, Normy."

"You have surprised me, Dot," said he. "And next spring, when the lease runs out, I'll give Blake and Brooks notice to quit, and you shall come to live with me."

He walked around with her, a little later, to Miss Chiff.

Miss Chiff received them with a smiling welcome.

"Oh, I'll take the very best care of her," said she. "I'm so glad to have you for a roommate, Miss Diver. And perhaps I can get you a place in the store where I try on."

"Try on?" repeated Dorothy, in some bewilderment.

"Jewelry and mantles, you know," explained Kitty Chiff. "For the customers to judge the effect. I know they want another girl at the ready-made linen counter, and I think that my recommendation would be worth something."

It was a quiet, home-like house, kept by a respectable widow, and Dorothy grew quite cheerful sitting by Kitty's fire, in spite of the disappointment she had that night sustained.

The rattling of milkmen's carts over the stones awoke her betimes in the morning, and she went with Kitty down to the breakfast-table, where only the earliest boarders had as yet made their appearance. And the first she knew, she was courtesying to the very hack-driver of last night, while Kitty was saying:

"Miss Diver, this is Mr. Kingston. Mr. Kingston, let me present you to my friend, Miss Diver, from Schoharie county."

"Why," cried Dot, "it's the hackman!"

"It's the young lady at Seventy-eight Pickett Place!" said Mr. Kingston. "But I am not a hackman!"

"Neither do I live at Seventy-eight Pickett Place," said Dorothy, laughing.

And then ensued a mutual explanation, in the course of which Charlie and Dorothy became excellent friends.

Their little heroine succeeded in obtaining the vacant situation at the store where Kitty Chiff "tried on," and, contrary to Mr. Kingston's prediction, her roses bloomed as brightly as ever at the expiration of three months. For Dot was happy, and there is no tonic like happiness.

"Well, puss," said Norman to her, as the winter wore itself away, "I gave the fellows notice to clear out to-day. I shall be all ready for you to come and keep house for me on the first of May."

Dorothy blushed vividly.

"Oh, Norman!" cried she, "I'm so sorry, but—"

"But what?" said Norman. You're not going back to the country?"

"No, not exactly," said Dorothy. "But I'm going to keep house for some one else. I'm engaged to Charlie Kingston."

"Hello!" said Norman Diver. "Then the fellows may as well stay where they are?"

"If you don't mind," whispered Dorothy. "Well, you'll have a good husband," said Norman. "And now that his uncle is dead, he'll have a nice little property of his own. After all, puss, it was a clever idea of yours to come to the city."

"But I never dreamed how things were going to turn out," said Dorothy. —Saturday Night.

A GOOD REASON FOR BEING DOWN ON LAWYERS.—"Dat's what ye git from foolin' round wid dem yere lawyers!" he said, as he joined a group of colored idlers on the market place.

Being asked why he went to a lawyer, he explained:

"You know dat Buck Williams? Powerful bad nigger he am. Gits drunk an' kicks in doahs an' clubs widmen. Came round to my cabin one night las' week an' stove de doah in an' wanted to clean out de shanty. I fall out o' bed an' goes for him wid an axe handle, an' dey war gwine to rest me fur 'sault wid intent to kill."

"Well?"

"Wall, when dey tole me dat he had a cracked head, a broken arm, an' war all broke up, I wanted to settle de matter. My ole woman coaxed me to go and see a lawyer an' de lawyer he tuxed me \$5, an' advised me to offer Buck my ole hoss an' wagon an' \$25 in cash."

"An' you did?"

"An' I didn't! When I got home his wife was dar waitin' fur me, and she said I didn't han' over \$2 in cash an' sack I flour she'd mutilate me wid a law suit. Took me jist seventeen ticks of de clock to settle on dat basis, an' now I can't be mutilated nohow. Lawyers! Dar, I paid \$5 to one of 'em to tell me dat I must reduce myself from poverty to affluence to settle a case whar de complainant didn't ax but \$3, an' would hev gin me fo'ty off on dat if I had kicked."

"I hear you are highly satisfied with your new minister, Brown?"

"Satisfied is a tame word to express our opinion of him. We are delighted with him."